

Message

From: Strynar, Mark [Strynar.Mark@epa.gov]
Sent: 6/11/2020 5:52:09 PM
To: Washington, John [Washington.John@epa.gov]; Ian Cousins [Ian.Cousins@aces.su.se]; Wang Zhanyun (IfU, ESD) [zhanyun.wang@ifu.baug.ethz.ch]
Subject: Re: our Science paper
Attachments: Cousins et al., 2020 Strategiesforgrouping PFAS.pdf

John,

Thanks. Here is their recent paper.

Mark

Dr. Mark Strynar
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From: Washington, John <Washington.John@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 12:41 PM
To: Ian Cousins <Ian.Cousins@aces.su.se>; Strynar, Mark <Strynar.Mark@epa.gov>; Wang Zhanyun (IfU, ESD) <zhanyun.wang@ifu.baug.ethz.ch>
Subject: RE: our Science paper

Hi everyone,

I have had a couple rejects from Science in the past; one did not make it to reviewers and two that did. On the ones that made it to reviewers, I had all good reviews save one single mixed review each time. Then I was basically told by the editor that Science receives enough great submissions that they don't need to chance publishing anything but fully positively reviewed.

On this paper, we did have one reviewer who liked the work scientifically but opined it was not Science-level material – an opinion which the editor did not weigh heavily thankfully.

On this paper, I suspect we were lucky in part because last year the reporter X. Lim wrote a piece in Nature making nontargeted/PFAS sound sexy. So I referenced that article in Science's competitor early on. Also, the large population that sadly is potentially exposed seemed to interest the editor.

During writing, I thought I had to pack a lot of good stuff in, so I included the fingerprinting part on the legacy compounds (which I thought was pretty cool, but now mainly is in the SM). As the editorial process proceeded, it became clear to me that the editor was centrally taken by the nontargeted CIPFPECAs and I could have probably saved the fingerprinting to try to get in ES&T. But by that point the structure of the paper was pretty set and we were on a roll with the editor, so I left it pretty close to the form we originally submitted.

So in this extremely limited experience, you need to grab the editor's attention initially to get it out for review, then not receive any mixed or negative reviews, then, in my experience, just work with the editor on issues (which seemed well reasoned to me). Once the editor seems interested, he was a LOT more hands-on than most other journals – you can tell this is his main job, not a secondary responsibility.

So overall, I agree, luck of interesting findings, luck of timing, luck of reviewers.

Guys, I am unsure if I have the Environmental Science of yours that Mark mentioned. I would very much appreciate receiving a PDF.

Stay well—
John

From: Ian Cousins <Ian.Cousins@aces.su.se>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 10:53 AM
To: Strynar, Mark <Strynar.Mark@epa.gov>; Wang Zhanyun (IfU, ESD) <zhangyun.wang@ifu.baug.ethz.ch>
Cc: Washington, John <Washington.John@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: our Science paper

Yes these details are interesting. I tried with a paper to PNAS (rejected) and then resubmitted to Nature Communications (rejected). We were pleased both times that it was sent for review but one reviewer killed it in each case.

When we did publish the work it won a best paper prize as the best paper in all the sister journals in Environmental Science. It had only been revised a little since first submission so our instinct about it being a good paper was correct. My guess is that there is some luck involved in getting even good papers through review. We at least worked out how to write a letter to the editors to get it sent to review in the first place. We encountered a jealousy factor from some reviewers; they were extra critical because we dared to submit to a top journal. On the whole contaminant papers are not the sexiest compared to some other fields so even getting a paper sent for review is a huge step. It counts for nothing though when a paper is rejected. With regard to the paper that was rejected twice, the big downside was the time lost for the junior scientist.

Best, Ian

From: Strynar, Mark <Strynar.Mark@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, 11 June 2020 16:46
To: Wang Zhanyun (IfU, ESD) <zhangyun.wang@ifu.baug.ethz.ch>
Cc: Ian Cousins <Ian.Cousins@aces.su.se>; Washington, John <Washington.John@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: our Science paper

John Washington the lead author would have to give you those details. He did all the heavy lifting on that aspect. John can you comment on Zyanyun's question. I shared your Science paper with them recently.

By the way congrats on the paper you and Ian recently published in Environmental Science. It is on my desktop awaiting my read.

Mark

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From: Wang Zhanyun (IfU, ESD) <zhanyun.wang@ifu.baug.ethz.ch>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 10:06 AM
To: Sara Valsecchi <valsecchi@irsa.cnr.it>
Cc: Strynar, Mark <Strynar.Mark@epa.gov>; ian.cousins@aces.su.se <ian.cousins@aces.su.se>
Subject: Re: our Science paper

Also big congratulations from my side! It's an important piece of work, and hopefully will create more momentum on PFAS.

How was the experience with publishing at Science? Was it a difficult one? Where were the complicated parts? Thanks!

On 10 Jun 2020, at 09:03, Sara Valsecchi <saramaria.valsec@tiscali.it> wrote:

Great Marc and compliments!

Sara
On 08/06/2020 20:49, Strynar, Mark wrote:

All,

I hope you are all doing well. Our paper came out in Science on Friday. Sara your water samples shared with Sonia Dagnino years ago were a piece of the puzzle. Thanks for that. Also thanks for the Rusconi et al., literature. I am keeping an eye out for C6O4 (1190931-41-9) at this site, but so far have not seen it.

Zhanyun and Ian thanks for bringing these compounds to my attention in your 2013 Environment International paper. I have been using Figure 1 from that paper in many of my talks since I read it.

I am attaching the paper and some commentary on the paper written by two US Law professors that points out the gaps of regulations in the US and Europe on these issues.

Mark

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